

MEDIA RELEASE

TJHC meets with senior Catholic educators in Canberra Goulburn



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Francis Sullivan, CEO of the Catholic Church's Truth Justice and Healing Council, has met with more than 75 school principals, teachers and administrators from the Canberra Goulburn Archdiocese to talk about the impact of the child sex abuse crisis on lay people working in Catholic church institutions.

Mr Sullivan said the work of Catholic schools, social services and health organisations is still respected and highly regarded by the community and the non-government and government partners they work with.

"What we have seen over the past decades as a result of the sexual abuse scandal is that respect for clergy and religious leaders has plummeted but the regard for the work the Catholic Church does on the ground is still very high," Mr Sullivan said.

"This is particularly true in Catholic schools where enrolments continue to climb.

"This is in part due to the current child protection measures in schools, the dedication of teachers and staff and the values in Catholic education.

"Catholic schools often lead the pack when it comes to best practice around child protection measures.

"But we need to be vigilant. Every child has the right to be safe at school and parents and carers also have a right to expect their children will be safe.

"While our schools have some of the most rigorous child protection policies and procedures of any institutions they are of little value if teachers, administrators and other school staff are not aware of them, fully trained and accountable," Mr Sullivan said.

There are some 1,300 teachers in Catholic primary and secondary schools in the Archdiocese of Canberra and Goulburn teaching around 25,000 students in almost 60 schools.

The Truth Justice and Healing Council is coordinating the Catholic Church's engagement with the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse. For more information on the TJHC go to: www.tjhcouncil.org.au

For more information on the Royal Commission go to: <http://www.childabuseroyalcommission.gov.au/>

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